

JS 44 (Rev. 09/11)

CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil coversheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS Natalie Munroe				DEFENDANTS Central Bucks School District; N. Robert Law; and Abram Lucabaugh			
(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff Bucks Co. (EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)				County of Residence of First Listed Defendant Bucks Co. (IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY) NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.			
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II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION (Place an "X" in One Box Only) III. C				TIZENSHIP OF PI	RINCIPAL PARTIES	(Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff)	
☐ 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff	3 Federal Question (U.S. Government N	ot a Party)		(For Diversity Cases Only) PT en of This State			
2 U.S. Government Defendant	☐ 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizenship	J 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Item III)		en of Another State	2		
				ren or Subject of a oreign Country	3	0 6 0 6	
IV. NATURE OF SUIT		NAME OF THE PROPERTY OF THE PR					
CONTRACT ☐ 110 Insurance	DEDCONAL INDIDV			ORFEITURE/PENALTY	BANKRUPTCY 3 422 Appeal 28 USC 158	OTHER STATUTES	
110 Insurance 120 Marine 130 Miller Act 140 Negotiable Instrument 150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment 151 Medicare Act 152 Recovery of Defaulted	☐ 310 Airplane ☐ 315 Airplane Product Liability ☐ 320 Assault, Libel &	rplane Product Product Liability ability 367 Health Care/ sault, Libel & Pharmaceutical ander Personal Injury deral Employers' Product Liability		25 Drug Related Scizure of Property 21 USC 881 90 Other	☐ 422 Appeal 28 USC 138 ☐ 423 Withdrawal	□ 375 False Claims Act □ 400 State Reapportionment □ 410 Antitrust □ 430 Banks and Banking □ 450 Commerce □ 460 Deportation □ 470 Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations	
Student Loans (Excl. Veterans) 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits 160 Stockholders' Suits 190 Other Contract 195 Contract Product Liability 196 Franchise	☐ 340 Marine ☐ 345 Marine Product Liability ☐ 350 Motor Vehicle ☐ 355 Motor Vehicle Product Liability ☐ 360 Other Personal Injury ☐ 362 Personal Injury - Med. Malpractice	Injury Product Liability PERSONAL PROPEI 370 Other Fraud 371 Truth in Lending 380 Other Personal Property Damage 385 Property Damage Product Liability	7. 0.7. 0.7.	LABOR 10 Fair Labor Standards Act 20 Labor/Mgmt. Relations 40 Railway Labor Act 51 Family and Medical Leave Act 90 Other Labor Litigation 91 Empl. Ret. Inc.	SOCIAL SECURITY 861 HIA (1395ff) 862 Black Lung (923) 863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g)) 864 SSID Title XVI 865 RSI (405(g))	480 Consumer Credit 490 Cable/Sat TV 850 Securities/Commodities/Exchange 890 Other Statutory Actions 891 Agricultural Acts 893 Environmental Matters 895 Freedom of Information Act 896 Arbitration	
REAL PROPERTY 210 Land Condemnation 220 Foreclosure 230 Rent Lease & Ejectment 240 Torts to Land 245 Tort Product Liability 290 All Other Real Property	CIVIL RIGHTS □ 440 Other Civil Rights □ 441 Voting ▼ 442 Employment □ 443 Housing/ Accommodations □ 445 Amer. w/Disabilities - Employment □ 446 Amer. w/Disabilities - Other □ 448 Education	PRISONER PETITIO 510 Motions to Vaca Sentence Habeas Corpus: 530 General 535 Death Penalty 540 Mandamus & Ot 550 Civil Rights 555 Prison Condition Godditions of	te state the state that the state th	IMMIGRATION 62 Naturalization Application 63 Habeas Corpus - Alien Detainee (Prisoner Petition) 65 Other Immigration	FEDERAL TAX SUITS 870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant) 871 IRS—Third Party 26 USC 7609	■ 899 Administrative Procedure Act/Review or Appeal of Agency Decision □ 950 Constitutionality of State Statutes	
V. ORIGIN (Place an "X" in One Box Only) If a loriginal							
VI. CAUSE OF ACTIO	ON 42 U.S.C. Section Brief description of ca	n 1983 use:	are filing	(Do not cite jurisdictional sta	atutes unless diversity):		
First Amendment Retaliation Case VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT: UNDER F.R.C.P. 23 DEMAND \$ CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint: 5,000,000.00 JURY DEMAND: X Yes IN No							
VIII. RELATED CASE(S) IF ANY (See instructions): JUDGE DOCKET NUMBER							
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RECEIPT# A	MOUNT	APPLYING IFP		JUDGE	MAG. J	UDGE	

Case 2:12-cv-03546**LON/IPED ISTOCKITE ON INTERIOR OF 12** Page 2 of 12

FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA — DESIGNATION FORM to be used by counsel to indicate the category of the case for the purpose of assignment to appropriate calendar.

Address of Plaintiff: 1226 Irma Road, Warminster, PA 18974							
Address of Defendant: 20 Welden Drive, Doylestown, PA 18901							
Place of Accident, Incident or Transaction: Doylestown, PA (Use Reverse Side For Additional Space)							
Does this civil action involve a nongovernmental corporate party with any parent corporation and any put (Attach two copies of the Disclosure Statement Form in accordance with Fed.R.Civ.P. 7.1(a)	yes No ✓ No ✓						
Does this case involve multidistrict litigation possibilities? RELATED CASE, IF ANY:	Yes No No						
Case Number: Judge Date Term	inated:						
Civil cases are deemed related when yes is answered to any of the following questions: 1. Is this case related to property included in an earlier numbered suit pending or within one year previous.	ously terminated action in this court? Yes No						
2. Does this case involve the same issue of fact or grow out of the same transaction as a prior suit pend one year previously terminated action in this court?	ing or within Yes □ No ☑						
3. Does this case involve the validity or infringement of a patent already in suit or any earlier numbered previously terminated action in this court?	I case pending or within one year Yes No V						
CIVIL: (Place in ONE CATEGORY ONLY)							
A. Federal Question Cases: 1.	B. Diversity Jurisdiction Cases: 1.						
ARBITRATION CERTIFICATION (Check appropriate Category)							
I, Stanley B. Cheiken, Esquire , counsel of record	d do hereby certify:						
Pursuant to Local Civil Rule 53.2, Section 3(c)(2), that to the best of my knowledge and beling \$150,000.00 exclusive of interest and costs; Relief other than monetary damages is sought.	ief, the damages recoverable in this civil action case exceed the sum of						
NOTE: A trial de novo will be a trial by jury only if there h	62106 Attorney I.D.# nas been compliance with F.R.C.P. 38.						
I certify that, to my knowledge, the within case is not related to any case now pending or within except as noted above.	•						
DATE: 6/21/12 Th //	62106						
Attorney-at-Law	Attorney I.D.#						

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

CASE MANAGEMENT TRACK DESIGNATION FORM

Natalie Munroe.,	CIVIL A C'EION						
Plaintiff,		CIVIL ACTION					
V.		No.					
CENTRAL BUCKS SCHOOL DISTRICT, ET AL., Defendants.		JURY TRIAL DEMANDED					
In accordance with the Civil Justice Expense and Delay Reduction Plan of this court, counsel for plaintiff shall complete a case Management Track Designation Form in all civil cases at the time of filing the complaint and serve a copy on all defendants. (See § 1:03 of the plan set forth on the reverse side of this form.) In the event that a defendant does not agree with the plaintiff regarding said designation, that defendant shall, with its first appearance, submit to the clerk of court and serve on the plaintiff and all other parties, a case management track designation form specifying the track to which that defendant believes the case should be assigned.							
SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWIN	IG CASE MANAGEM	IENT TRACKS:					
(a) Habeas Corpus – Cases brought under 28 U.S.C. §2241 through §2255.							
(b) Social Security – Cases requesting review of a decision of the Secretary of Health and Human Services denying plaintiff Social Security Benefits ()							
(c) Arbitration – Cases required to be designated for arbitration under Local Civil Rule 53.2.							
(d) Asbestos – Cases involving claims for personal injury or property damage from exposure to asbestos.							
(e) Special Management – Cases that do not fall into tracks (a) through (d) that are commonly referred to as complex and that need special or intense management by the court. (See reverse side of this form for a detailed explanation of special management cases.)							
(f) Standard Management – Cases that d	lo not fall into any one	of the other tracks.	(x)				
6/21/12 Date	Stanley B. Cheiken Attorney-at-law		Attorney for Plaintiff				
(215) 572-8600	(215) 572-7838		scheiken@earthlink.net				
Telephone	Fax Number	ALCONOMIC CONTRACTOR C	Email Address				

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

NATALIE MUNROE, : CIVIL ACTION

1226 Irma Road :

Warminster, PA 18974, : No.

Plaintiff,

V. .

: JURY TRIAL DEMANDED
CENTRAL BUCKS SCHOOL DISTRICT:

20 Welden Drive : Doylestown, PA 18901, :

... 1

-and-

N. ROBERT LAWS

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

CRIVED ALL PLOYER SCHOOL DISTRICTS

CENTRAL BUCKS SCHOOL DISTRICT
40 John Dyer Way
Doylestown, PA 18902,

-and-

Abram Lucabaugh

PRINCIPAL : CENTRAL BUCKS HIGH SCHOOL EAST :

7 Timber Brook Drive Quakertown, PA 18951,

Defendants.

COMPLAINT

Plaintiff Natalie Munroe, by and through undersigned counsel, hereby brings this Complaint against defendants Central Bucks School District, N. Robert Laws, and Abram Lucabaugh, and avers as follows:

PARTIES

1. Plaintiff Natalie Munroe ("Munroe") is an adult individual and a citizen of the

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania residing at 1226 Irma Road, Warminster, PA 18974.

- 2. Defendant Central Bucks School District (hereinafter the "School District") is organized and existing as a political subdivision under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. At all times relevant hereto, the School District was responsible for the education of approximately 20,000 students and operated 15 elementary schools, 5 middle schools and three high schools, including Central Bucks High School East in Doylestown, PA. The School District's administrative offices are located at 20 Welden Drive, Doylestown, PA.
- 3. Defendant N. Robert Laws ("Laws") is an adult individual and a citizen of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania residing therein at the address set forth in the caption. At all times relevant hereto, defendant Laws has been the Superintendent of Schools of the School District.
- 4. Defendant Abram Lucabaugh ("Lucabaugh") is an adult individual and a citizen of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania residing therein at the address set forth in the caption. At all times relevant hereto, defendant Lucabaugh has been the Principal of Central Bucks High School East.

JURISDICTION

5. Munroe invokes the jurisdiction of this Court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1331 (Federal Question Jurisdiction); and 28 U.S.C. §1343 (Civil Rights).

VENUE

6. Venue in this action lies in this judicial district, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1391(b), the events giving rise to Munroe's claims having occurred herein.

FACTS

7. In 2006, Munroe was hired by the School District as an English Teacher at

Central Bucks East High School.

- 8. At all times relevant hereto, Munroe performed her job in an excellent fashion.
- 9. In 2010, Munroe received tenure.
- 10. Prior to the events giving rise to this lawsuit, Munroe received excellent feedback and performance evaluations.
- 11. Indeed, in June 2008, defendant Lucabaugh wrote a letter of reference in support of Munroe's application to a Master's in Education program in which he stated, *inter alia*:

Over the course of the last two years, I had a chance to work with Natalie as a direct supervisor of the English department. As a classroom teacher, Natalie is fantastic. She is articulate, creative, well-versed in her subject matter, and particularly astute in dealing with a wide variety of learning styles, demonstrating an ability to motivate even the most reluctant of learners; additionally, she not only holds herself to high expectations, but fully expects her students and colleagues to reflect the meticulous, conscientious manner in which she approaches each aspect of her chosen profession.

Natalie Munroe is a woman of utmost integrity, character, and intelligence. She is a consummate educator with a sparkling future, and a woman whom I respect both personally and professionally. I am honored to know and work with Natalie, and am absolutely certain she will represent your ideals of what a graduate student at Gratz should be.

- 12. In or about August 2009, Munroe created a blog entitled *Where are we going, and why are we in this handbasket?*
- 13. Munroe's blog was intended as a vehicle to keep in touch with friends. In her blog, Munroe discussed such mundane topics as her favorite restaurants, family trips, and her work experiences.
- 14. Munroe intended for the blog to be anonymous, except as to her friends who she invited to be blog "followers." Thus, she blogged under the name "Natalie M" and she avoided

making any reference to the locations where she lived and worked, the names of her students, and the name of the school where she taught.

- 15. In February 2011, when the blog came under scrutiny by the School District, the blog had merely nine (9) followers, two of whom were Munroe and her husband.
- 16. Munroe published 84 blog entries between August 9, 2009 and November 25, 2010, most of which had nothing to do with her school or work.
- 17. At no time during this period did the School District have any policy restricting an employee's ability to maintain a blog.
 - 18. At all times, Munroe's activity in blogging was undertaken as a private citizen.
- 19. Therefore, Munroe's blogging activity was protected under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.
- 20. On February 9, 2011, defendant Lucabaugh asked to meet with Munroe. At that time, he showed Munroe several printed copies of her blog entries and asked her whether she was the author of them. Among the blog entries in questions, were entries in which Munroe made comments about her students' unwillingness to work hard and cooperate in school, lack of student accountability, and the lack of support for teachers shown by school administrators and parents.
 - 21. Munroe acknowledged to Lucabaugh that she had authored the blogs.
 - 22. In retaliation for Munroe's protected free speech in publishing her blog:
- a. Lucabaugh instructed Munroe to gather her belongings, whereupon she was escorted from the building by Lucabaugh and a school security guard; and
 - b. defendants immediately suspended Munroe from her job.
 - 23. Later that day, and in the weeks that followed, Munroe's blog became the subject

of local, national, and international press coverage, in print, as well as on radio and television.

- 24. Defendants Laws and Lucabaugh were reported in the press as having stated that Munroe was suspended, and would likely be fired, for having made "egregious" statements about students in her blog.
 - 25. Munroe defended herself and her conduct in her blog, as well as in the media.
- 26. In February 2011, Munroe appeared on CBS, ABC, NBC, CNN, Fox News, and other television stations; and Munroe gave interviews to Time Magazine, Reuters, the Associated Press, the Philadelphia Inquirer and other print news sources.
- 27. In each appearance and interview, Munroe defended her blog entries, refused to apologize for the comments made on her blog, and attempted to focus attention on the education debate, pointing out that school administrators and government official often fail to support teachers, choosing instead to placate unreasonable parents and unmotivated students, and thereby undermining the educational system.
- 28. At all times, Munroe's activities in continuing to blog, as well as in speaking to the media, were undertaken as a private citizen. Accordingly, these activities were protected under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.
 - 29. In retaliation for Munroe's protected free speech:
- a. In June 2011, Munroe was given a retaliatory and false unsatisfactory performance evaluation by defendant Lucabaugh. Lucabaugh predicated his unsatisfactory evaluation on Munroe's protected blogging activity, stating "Teacher failed to exhibit acceptable and professional language on an internet blog."
- b. defendants refused to grant Munroe's requests for a transfer to another school in the School District.

- c. On August 3, 2011, defendants held a press conference in which defendant Lucabaugh stated, "Despite the fact that Mrs. Munroe retains legal employment rights, I would hope that none of us lose sight of the real issue. The real issue is that while something may be legally right, it may not be ethically or morally right. There are consequences that occur when a person chooses to exercise her rights and say outrageous, disrespectful, vulgar and cruel things about other people . . . especially when it's a teacher saying terrible things. . . ."
- d. In August 2011, defendants informed School District residents that they would honor all requests of students to "opt out" of Munroe's classes.
- e. In September 2011, defendants placed Munroe on a performance "improvement plan" allegedly necessitated by the retaliatory and false unsatisfactory performance evaluation.
- f. Commencing in October 2011, defendants began retaliatory, unannounced observations of Munroe's classes. Following the unannounced evaluations, defendants would subject Munroe's classroom efforts to ridiculous and overly critical evaluations, routinely concluding that lessons which Munroe had been teaching for years were unsatisfactory.
- g. On October 12, 2011, defendant Lucabaugh sent Munroe a retaliatory disciplinary email calling her unprofessional for briefly leaving her classroom to use the restroom while her students were quietly reading. Munroe was singled out for this discipline while other teachers who used the restroom in this fashion were not disciplined.
- h. On or about October 28, 2011, allegedly on the basis of four unsatisfactory classroom evaluations, defendants instructed Munroe to begin submitting daily lesson plans using a template designed by the School District. The sole purpose of this requirement was to retaliate against Munroe for her protected free speech. Indeed, other teachers were not required

to submit daily lesson plans. Moreover, defendants knew that it would be difficult, if not impossible, for Munroe to comply with this instruction because of the time and effort that is required to prepare a lesson plan using the School District's template. Additionally, Munroe had already made her existing lesson plans, in the format that she had been using for years, available to School District evaluators.

- i. Throughout the fall semester of 2011, defendants continuously created a harassing and hostile work environment for Munroe, undermining her ability to teach by repeatedly observing her classroom, requiring Munroe to make unnecessary changes to her lesson plans, and requiring her to attend multiple, lengthy meetings wherein she was subjected to retaliatory, negative evaluations. Defendants' conduct in this regard was transparently obvious they were hoping to make Munroe's job so difficult that she would quit.
- j. On January 20, 2012, defendants issued Munroe a retaliatory second unsatisfactory performance evaluation.
- k. Throughout the spring semester of 2012, defendants continued to subject Munroe to retaliatory classroom evaluations, singling her out for ridiculous and untrue criticism at every opportunity. Munroe's colleagues began to refer to the treatment she was being subjected to as the administration's "spring push."
- 1. During this period, Munroe had multiple meeting with defendant

 Lucabaugh in which he refused remove the School District's requirement that Munroe submit

 daily lesson plans despite the fact that Munroe clearly articulated that it was impossible (because
 there were not enough hours in the day) for her to comply with this unreasonable instruction.
- m. On June 1, 2012, defendants issued Munroe a retaliatory third unsatisfactory performance evaluation. At that time, Munroe was notified that defendant intend

to recommend the termination of her employment contract at the meeting of the Central Bucks Board of School Directors scheduled for June 26, 2012.

COUNT I 42 U.S.C. §1983 Plaintiff vs. Defendants

- 30. The averments contained in paragraphs 1 through 29 above are incorporated by reference as though fully set forth herein.
- 31. Under color of state law, defendants School District, Laws and Lucabaugh have deprived Munroe of her First Amendment Constitutional rights by harassing and retaliating against her as aforesaid.
- 32. As a result of defendants' conduct, Munroe has suffered and will continue to suffer monetary damages, including lost wages and benefits.
- 33. As a result of defendants' conduct, Munroe has suffered emotional distress, embarrassment, humiliation and damage to her reputation and earning capacity.
- 34. The conduct of defendants Laws and Lucabaugh is extreme and outrageous thereby justifying the imposition of punitive damages.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff Natalie Munroe respectfully requests that this Honorable Court:

- a. Enter an Order reinstating Munroe to her employment with School District with full benefits and emoluments of employment retroactive to the date of her termination.
- b. Award Munroe backpay, front pay, compensatory damages and such other monetary damages as Munroe proves at trial.
 - c. Award Munroe punitive damages against defendants Laws and Lucabaugh

- d. Award Munroe her costs, including expert witness fees and reasonable attorney's fees.
 - e. Grant such other relief as the Court deems just and proper.

Date: June 20, 2012

STANLEY B. CHEIKEN, ESQUIRE

The Pavilion – Suite 503 261 Old York Road Jenkintown, PA 19046 (215) 572-8600

Date: June 20, 2012

STEVEN L. ROVNER, ESQUIRE

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Attorneys for Natalie Munroe